

Suzanne Johnston



Suzanne Johnston is one of Australia's most versatile artists, acclaimed for her performances on the opera, musical theatre and concert stages. She made her debut in 1981 as Prince Orlofsky in *Die Fledermaus* with the Victoria State Opera, going on to perform a formidable variety of operatic roles with that company including Suzuki in *Madama Butterfly*, Olga in *Eugene Onegin*, Dorabella in *Così fan tutte*, Siebel in *Faust*, Manja in *Countess Maritza*, Bersi in *Andrea Chenier*, the Composer in *Ariadne auf Naxos*, Zerlina in *Don Giovanni*, Rosina in *The Barber of Seville*, the Secretary in *The Consul*, Dulcineé in *Don*

Quichotte and the title role in *Carmen*. In 1993 she starred as Eliza Doolittle, opposite Anthony Warlow's Henry Higgins, in the VSO's sellout production of *My Fair Lady*, which led to further performances in Sydney and in concert at Werribee Park for IMG.

Following her debut with The Australian Opera (now Opera Australia) in 1986 as Feodor in *Boris Godunov*, she has performed numerous roles to critical acclaim with that company: Carmen, Cherubino in *The Marriage of Figaro*, Zerlina, Dorabella, and notably, Urbain in the performances of *Les Huguenots* marking the retirement of Dame Joan Sutherland. Her performances in new productions have included Thisbe in Michael Hampe's *La Cenerentola*, the title roles in *L'Incoronazione di Poppea*, *La Perichole* and *Carmen*, Hansel in *Hansel and Gretel*, Octavian in *Der Rosenkavalier*, Annio in *La Clemenza di Tito*, Tessa in *The Gondoliers*, Varvara in *Katya Kabanova* under Sir Charles Mackerras, Orsini in *Lucrezia Borgia*, Stephano in *Roméo et Juliette*, Prince Orlofsky in *Der Fledermaus*, the title role in *The Gypsy Princess* and Nicklausse in *Les contes d'Hoffmann*, as well as the roles of Dorabella and Sesto in *Guilio Cesare* to critical acclaim. She has also performed *Sesto* for Opera Queensland.

Internationally, Suzanne Johnston has appeared as Thisbe in *La Cenerentola* at the Salzburg Festival in 1989, and at Glyndebourne Festival Opera as Dorabella in 1991 in a new production of *Così fan tutte* by Trevor Nunn, under the baton of Sir Simon Rattle. Following her success in this role, she was invited to return to the Festival in 1992 for further performances conducted by Bruno Weil.

Suzanne Johnston's concert appearances include a Gala Concert at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden for the Australian Music Foundation in London, televised nationally by the ABC, as well as recitals in London, Paris, Milan, New York and Los Angeles. She has also performed with all of the state symphony orchestras, undertaken several tours for Musica Viva, appeared in the highly acclaimed concert performance of *Follies* in Sydney, sung with Nederlands Danse Theater, the Australian Pops Orchestra, at *Carols in the Domain* and *Carols by Candlelight*, and on *Midday* and *Good Morning Australia*. She has also performed in cabaret performances with Judi Connelli in New York at the Cabaret Convention and the famous Oak Room at the Algonquin Hotel, and also in Sydney. Her performances with The 3 Divas include *Opera in the Vineyards* at the Hunter Valley, appearances with the Sydney, Tasmanian and Adelaide Symphony orchestras, and a national tour.

She has been awarded the Sydney Theatre Critics' Circle Award for Operatic Performance of the Year, a MO Award for Operatic Performer of the Year, and was awarded a Churchill Fellowship. She has also received Green Room Awards for her performances as Rosina, Thisbe and Cherubino.

Suzanne Johnston's discography includes recordings with the Australian Pops Orchestra, video recordings of *Les Huguenots*, *La Cenerentola*, *The Gondoliers* and *Die Fledermaus* for Opera Australia, and ARIA award winning CD, *Perfect Strangers*, recorded for ABC Classics with Judi Connelli and the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra.

Suzanne Johnston's recent appearances include a recital at National Gallery of Australia, the title role in *Carmen*, Hermia in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and her role debut as the Fox in Neil Armfield's production of *The Cunning Little Vixen*, all for Opera Australia, concerts with the Sydney Symphony and with The 3 Divas in regional Victoria as well as *Morning Melodies* at Melbourne's Hamer Hall. Her engagements in 2006/07 include the role of Ruth in Opera Australia's production of *The Pirates of Penzance* at the Sydney Opera House and in Canberra, Brisbane, Adelaide and Melbourne, Bernstein's *Candide* at the Perth International Festival of the Arts, an appearance with the Canberra Symphony Orchestra, recitals at the Port Fairy Festival and in Melbourne entitled, *Better the Diva you Know...*, an Australia-wide tour with Judi Connelli entitled *Take Two* and various corporate events.